



US Army Corps
of Engineers®
New Orleans District

Public Notice: EIS Scoping Meeting Announcement

Donaldsonville to the Gulf Hurricane Protection Project, Feasibility Study

January 2003

Scoping Process

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) provides for an early and open public process for determining the scope of issues, resources, impacts, and alternatives to be addressed in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). This process is referred to as the Scoping Process. The purpose of this document is to announce a series of scoping meetings for the Donaldsonville to the Gulf Hurricane Protection Feasibility Study that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is conducting in association with the local sponsors, the Lafourche Basin Levee District and the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development. Ideas and issues brought from scoping can be incorporated into the EIS process, thereby reducing chances for reformulation or reassessment after the public review of the draft EIS.

Need for Action

The USACE, New Orleans District, is initiating this study under the authority of a United States House of Representative: Transportation and Infrastructure Committee resolution adopted May 6, 1998. The focus for initial action is within the jurisdictional boundaries of the Lafourche Basin Levee District, which cover portions of the parishes of Ascension, Assumption, Lafourche, St. Charles, St. James, and St. John the Baptist. The project area has been declared a Federal Disaster Area four times since 1985 after flooding events. FEMA has provided federal disaster assistance as recently as 2001 in response to flood events. The basin is subject to heavy rainfall, tidal surges from the Gulf of Mexico, and hurricane flooding.

Study Purpose

The purpose of the proposed study is as follows: to investigate the feasibility of constructing a hurricane protection levee from Larose Louisiana that connects to the authorized West Bank Hurricane Protection Levee Project; to investigate possible solutions to improve interior drainage within the Lac des Allemands drainage basin; to investigate restoring and/or protecting the natural and human environment to create a sustainable ecosystem in the Lac des Allemands drainage basin.

Study Alternatives

No-action: The No-action alternative must be evaluated and retained throughout the study. The action alternatives will be compared to the no-action alternative to determine impacts.

Larose to Boutee: This plan would evaluate the feasibility of constructing approximately 57 miles of hurricane protection levee from Larose Louisiana to the western Davis Pond guide levee located east of Boutte, Louisiana. The levee would start at the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway in Lafourche Parish and proceed north, paralleling the east side of Bayou Lafourche to U.S. Highway 90 south of Raceland, Louisiana. From Raceland the levee would proceed northeast, paralleling the south side of U.S. Highway 90 to Bayou des Allemands. A water control structure would be built at Bayou des Allemands. From Bayou des Allemands the levee would proceed northeast to the west Davis Pond guide levee, east of Boutte, Louisiana. Levee would follow existing St. Charles Parish levees or along routes for which the parish has obtained permits.

This plan will investigate ecosystem restoration activities and interior drainage issues in the Lac des Allemands drainage basin between Donaldsonville and des Allemands, Louisiana. Variations in the Larose to Boutee plan that will be investigated include alignments that avoid, minimize or mitigate for wetland impacts; levees of various elevations and widths; and levees that provide varying levels of protection from hurricanes.

Alternatives for the flood control structure at Bayou des Allemands will be investigated for several locations where the levee could intersect Bayou des Allemands.

Larose to Lafitte: This plan would investigate the feasibility of constructing a hurricane protection levee from Larose to Lafitte, Louisiana along the bank of the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway. Water control structures of various sizes and capacities would be studied as needed.

Ecosystem Restoration, Lac des Allemands Drainage Basin: Ecosystem restoration alternatives being considered include a freshwater diversion from the Mississippi River, breaching of existing spoil banks to create more overland flow of water through the Bayou des Allemands basin, restoration of Lake Boeuf, and drainage improvements to prevent stagnation.

Additionally, other alternatives may be developed during the scoping process.

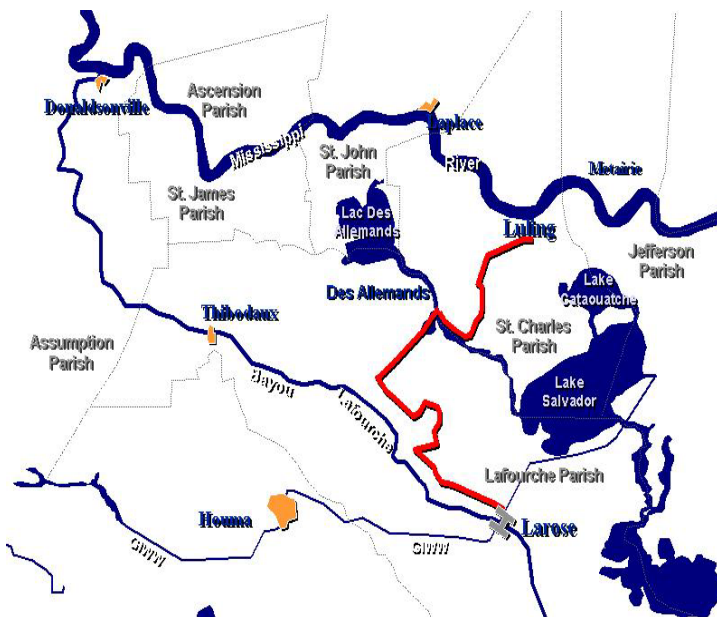


Figure 1. General area where levee and restoration efforts would occur as proposed in Recon Study alternative.

Resources/Issues to be addressed in the EIS

An initial list of resources to be evaluated in the EIS includes elements of the natural environment such as wetlands (marshes and swamps), bottomland hardwoods, wildlife resources, aquatic resources (including fisheries and essential fish habitat), and threatened and endangered species. Elements of the manmade environment that will be evaluated include: water quality, air quality, agricultural lands, recreation resources, and cultural resources. Socioeconomic items to be evaluated in the EIS include navigation, flood protection, business and industrial activity, employment, land use, property values, public/community facilities and services, tax revenues, population, community and regional growth, transportation, housing, community cohesion, and noise.

Study Participation

Interested parties are encouraged to become involved in the study. Additional information is available at the project web site: <http://www.mvn.usace.army.mil/prj/dtog/>.

Public Meeting Schedule

A scoping meeting will be held on February 4, 2003 beginning at 6:30 PM in the cafeteria of the Hahnville High School located at 200 Tiger Drive in Boutte, LA 70039.

A scoping meeting will be held on February 5, 2003 beginning at 7:00 PM at the West Bank Court House located at 2631 LA 20 West in Vacherie, LA 70090.

A scoping meeting will be held on February 10, 2003 beginning at 7:00 PM at the Leman Memorial Community Center located at 110 Clay Street in Donaldsonville, LA 70346.

A scoping meeting will be held on February 11, 2003 beginning at 7:00 PM in the cafeteria of the Assumption

High School located at 4880 Hwy. 308 in Napoleonville, LA 70390.

A scoping meeting will be held on February 12, 2003 beginning at 7:00 PM in the cafeteria of the West St. John High School located at 480 Hwy. 3127 in Edgard, LA 70049.

Meeting Agenda

The scoping meetings will begin with a brief description of the EIS process; the Corps studies process, and the study alternatives. Scoping meeting participants will then be divided into smaller groups where a facilitator for each group will record the participants' answers to the following questions:

Question #1. What are the most important issues, resources, and impacts that we should consider in the EIS?

Question #2. Are there any other alternatives or modifications to existing alternatives that we should consider in the EIS?

Scoping meeting participants, and other interested parties, are requested to provide answers to the two questions, as well as other areas of concern. Comments will be summarized and described in a "Scoping Document" that will be made available to all participants that sign up. Written comments will be accepted by letters postmarked no later than 30 days from the date of the meeting.

For Further Information

Questions regarding the proposed study should be addressed to the Project Manager Mr. Frank Duarte, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Planning, Programs and Project Management Division, CEMVN-PM-W, P.O. Box 60267, New Orleans, LA 70160-0267, telephone (504) 862-1014. Mr. Duarte may be reached via e-mail at francisco.m.duarte@mvn02.usace.army.mil.

Questions regarding the EIS should be addressed to Mr. Gib Owen, CEMVN-PM-RS, P.O. Box 60267, New Orleans, Louisiana 70160-0267, and telephone (504) 862-1337. Mr. Owen may be reached via e-mail at gib.a.owen@mvn02.usace.army.mil

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